CHAPTER TWO - ALTERNATIVES

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

This chapter presents four alternative proposals for managing public lands in the Vernal Planning Area. The alternatives were developed in response to the issues identified in the public scoping process and the planning criteria. BLM recognizes that social, economic, and environmental issues cross land ownership lines and that extensive cooperation is needed to actively address issues of mutual concern. To the extent possible, these alternatives were crafted utilizing input from public scoping comments; Duchesne, Daggett, and Uintah county representatives; and other cooperating agencies.

2.2 AGENCY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The BLM preferred alternative is Alternative A. The preferred alternative is not a final agency decision; it is rather an indication of the agency's preliminary preference. The alternative identified is the BLM's preferred alternative at the Draft EIS stage in the environmental review process. This preference may be changed based on the agency and public comments that are received on the Draft EIS. An agency preferred alternative will also be presented in the Final EIS. BLM's preference at that time will consider all information that has been received during the agency and public comment period.

2.2.1 Description of Alternative A (Preferred Alternative)

Management direction is generally broad and accommodates a wide variety of values and uses. The planning area would be managed to provide a sustainable flow of resources for human use, while protecting important watersheds and providing viable populations of native and desirable non-native plants species, and to provide wildlife habitat and opportunities for recreation use.

2.2.2 Description of Alternative B

This alternative provides for most resource uses but would emphasis oil and gas development, where feasible. Renewable resources would be protected by balancing the development of mineral resources with focused and prudent mitigation measures.

2.2.3 Description of Alternative C

The natural succession of ecosystems would be allowed to proceed in select management areas. This alternative would strongly emphasize maintenance of watershed conditions, species viability, properly functioning ecosystems, and a reduction of habitat fragmentation.

2.2.4 Description of Alternative D (Current Management)

Maintain present uses by continuing present management direction and activities while abiding by all new mandates, Executive Orders, and directives that have been implemented since the previous RMPs were completed.

2.3 MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

All Alternatives within this RMP share several goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines that ensure protection of resources and compliance with applicable laws. In order to avoid redundancy within the Alternatives, these types of guidance are categorized as "Management Common to All".

2.3.1 Goals and Objectives Common to All Alternatives

Utah BLM Rangeland Health Standards, described below, apply to all resource programs and authorized activities:

1. Upland soils exhibit permeability and infiltration rates that sustain or improve site productivity, considering the soil type, climate, and landform.
2. Riparian and wetland areas are in properly functioning condition. Stream channel morphology and functions are appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.
3. Desired species, including native, threatened, endangered, and special-status species, are maintained at a level appropriate for the site and species involved.
4. BLM would apply and comply with water quality standards established by the State of Utah (R.317-2) and the Federal Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts. Activities on BLM Lands would support the designated beneficial uses described in the Utah Water Quality Standards (R.317-2) for surface water and groundwater.

Monitoring and evaluation strategies would be implemented to measure progress in accordance with Utah BLM Rangeland Health Standards based on site-specific conditions. Site-specific conditions must be documented in order to warrant modification of prescriptions.

BLM recognizes that not all activities would comply with Rangeland Health Standards in the short term. All authorized activities would require reclamation and rehabilitation actions to ensure sustainability and productivity of the site.

Assure that counties and others, such as Native American tribes (Tribes) whose interests might be affected have a sufficient opportunity for productive participation in BLM planning and resource management decision-making.

2.3.2 Management Prescriptions

The VPA includes a wide array of geographical landscapes and ecosystems. The expansive nature of the RMP mandates a broad scale of decision-making.

2.3.2.1 Human Health and Safety

BLM would strive to ensure that human health and safety concerns on public lands remains a major priority. Dangerous sites, structures, roads, or other facilities e.g., abandoned mines would be stabilized or closed if it is determined that they are a public hazard. Cabins would be assessed relative to public hazard. If determined to be hazardous, appropriate action would be taken to correct the deficiencies.

2.3.2.2 Hazardous Materials

Use of pesticides and herbicides shall comply with the applicable Federal and State laws. Pesticides and herbicides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses and within

limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior. Prior to the use of pesticides, project proponents shall obtain from the Authorized Officer written approval of a plan showing the type and quantity of material to be used; pest(s) to be controlled; method of application; location of storage and disposal of containers; and any other information deemed necessary by the Authorized Officer. Emergency use of pesticides shall be approved in writing by the Authorized Officer prior to use.

2.3.2.3 Climate Considerations

BLM would continue to regularly monitor and evaluate climatic and vegetative data. This data would be shared and compiled with other land managing agencies of the planning area. Using a cooperative and collaborative approach, should the analysis of such data reveal a substantial shift (either upward or downward) in both the timing and level of production of native rangelands, either planning-area-wide or on specific sites within the planning area, BLM would initiate actions to ensure any permitted/allowed use of such resources would not adversely affect the long-term productivity of such areas.

2.3.2.4 Fire, Drought, and Natural Disasters

BLM would coordinate appropriate management responses (AMR) with affected parties where natural resources may be impacted by fire, drought, insects and diseases, or natural disasters. A variety of emergency or interim actions may be necessary to minimize land health degradations, such as reduced forage allocations; reductions in the number of livestock; wild horses and/or wildlife; increased mitigation measures to ensure reclamation; limitations on energy field activities; and recreational uses.

Current Utah BLM Rangeland Health Standards would be incorporated, as appropriate, across all resource programs as a minimum. Management prescriptions in the form of constraints to use, terms and conditions, and stipulations may be needed to sustain rangeland health and viability. Management prescriptions would consider the following:

- **Surface-disturbing activities –** These would be closely monitored to ensure compliance with authorizations/permits, conditions of approval, or terms and conditions. Actions minimizing new surface disturbance allowed by regulations, as well as actions insuring successful reclamation, would be of paramount concern. During periods of drought, BLM would require additional actions such as changes to standard seed mix compositions, amounts of seed, and method of application. Methods to ensure successful revegetation following disturbance would include hydromulching, installation of drip irrigators, fencing to exclude ungulate grazing/browsing.
- **Livestock grazing –** Use would be allowed in both quantity and timing that would not result in a downward shift in rangeland health and/or production. BLM would work cooperatively to affect a grazing strategy specific to a grazing permittee's individual grazing allotment(s), and make changes to the grazing authorizations as appropriate within the limits of the existing permit and in accordance with the grazing regulations. In the case of drought, the last recourse for BLM would be to temporarily close the range, or portions of it, to livestock grazing.
- **Wild horse management –** Use would be allowed within allocations made in the land use plan, and overall herd numbers would be confined to management limits established

as an appropriate management level. Should conditions be such that the principle of a thriving ecological balance would not be maintained due to climatic conditions, "excess" wild horses would be removed from the range.

- **Wildlife management –** During periods of prolonged dryness or drought, to the extent that wildlife grazing ungulate populations cannot be sustained due to competition for water and available forage and overall animal health is compromised, BLM would enter into discussions with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) regarding herd numbers and overall management options to combat the effects of drought.
- **Recreation –** During periods of prolonged dryness or drought, BLM, in cooperation with local and state fire management agencies, would limit campfires to established fire rings or fully contained fires. The last resort would be to close the public lands to campfires of any kind.
- **Off Highway/Road Vehicles (OHV) –** OHV use during period of prolonged dryness would be further restricted to existing roads and/or trails; or, if site-specific conditions warrant, closure to OHVs would be implemented to minimize vehicle-induced injury or damage to rangeland and/or woodland resources and to minimize the potential of spark caused fires.

2.3.2.5 Education, Interpretation, and Research

BLM would work with its partners including local school districts and universities to develop a variety of opportunities to promote education, research, and interpretation on public lands.

2.3.2.6 Surface Stipulations Applicable to All Surface-disturbing Activities

Appendix L lists by alternative surface stipulations referred to throughout the draft RMP and EIS. Surface Stipulations, including exceptions, modifications, and waivers would be applied to all land use authorizations, permits, and leases issued on BLM administered lands.

2.4 MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ACTION ALTERNATIVES BY RESOURCE PROGRAM

The goals and objectives described below apply only to Alternatives A, B, and C.

Goals and objectives for Alternative D are contained in the 1994 Diamond Mountain RMP and the 1985 Book Cliffs RMP. Acreage figures for Alternative D may reflect different sum totals, as calculations were determined using different technology.

2.4.1 Abandoned Mine Lands

2.4.1.1 Goals and Objectives

In conformance with BLM's long-term strategies and National Policies regarding Abandoned Mine Lands (AML), this RMP recognizes the need to work with our partners toward identifying and addressing physical safety and environmental hazards at all AML sites on public lands. In order to accomplish this long-term goal, the following criteria would be established to assist in determining priorities for site and area mitigation and reclamation.

The criteria that would be used to establish physical safety hazard program priorities are:

1. AML physical safety program's highest priority would be the cleaning up of those AML sites where (a) a death or injury has occurred, (b) the site is situated on or in immediate proximity to developed recreation sites and areas with high visitor use, and (c) upon formal risk assessment, a high or extremely high risk level is indicated;
2. AML would be factored into future recreation management area designations, land use planning assessments, and all applicable use authorizations;
3. the site is presently listed or is eligible for listing in the Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System (AMLIS); and
4. AML hazards should be, to the extent practicable, mitigated or remediated on the ground during site development.

The criteria used to establish water-quality-based AML program priorities are:

1. the state has identified the watershed as a priority based on (a) one or more water laws or regulations; (b) threat to public health or safety; and (c) threat to the environment;
2. the project reflects a collaborative effort with other land managing agencies; and
3. the project would be funded by contributions from collaborating agencies.

These priorities would be maintained and updated as needed in the state AML strategy.

2.4.2 Air Quality

The VPA is located in an area designated as attainment or unclassifiable for all pollutants (40 CFR 81.345; 2002).

2.4.2.1 Goals and Objectives

Ensure that authorizations granted to use public lands and BLM's own management programs comply with and support applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and implementation plans pertaining to air quality.

2.4.2.2 Actions Common to All

Prescribed burns would be consistent with the State of Utah Division of Environmental Quality (UDEQ) permitting process and timed so as to minimize smoke impacts.

Comply with Utah Air Conservation (UAC) Regulation R446-1. The best air quality control technology, provided by the Utah Division of Air Quality (UDAQ), would be applied as needed to meet air quality standards.

Comply with UAC Regulation R446-1-4.5.3, which prohibits the use, maintenance, or construction of roadways without taking appropriate dust abatement measures. Compliance would be obtained through special stipulations as a requirement on new projects and through the use of dust abatement control techniques in problem areas.

Comply with the current Smoke Management Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) between BLM, USFS, and UDAQ. The MOU, in accordance with UAC regulation R446-1-2.4.4, requires reporting size, date of burn, fuel type, and estimated air emissions from each prescribed burn.

2.4.3 Cultural Resources

The VPA encompasses a large and diverse assemblage of prehistoric archaeological sites, historical archaeological sites and localities, and sites with traditional cultural values.

2.4.3.1 Goals and Objectives

Preserve and protect a representative array of significant cultural resources including but not limited to traditional cultural properties, traditional use areas, rock art, and ceremonial sites, and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.

Preserve and protect cultural resources in accordance with existing laws, regulations, and Executive Orders, in consultation with designated contacts from Native American tribes (Tribes) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.

Preserve and conserve cultural resources by conducting activities in a way that protect values and provide for the following benefits: education, research, public use, conservation for future use, and interpretation.

2.4.3.2 Actions Common to All

Protect burial sites, associated burial goods, and sacred items in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act.

Evaluate cultural resources according to National Register criteria (36 CFR Part 60.4) and assign cultural resources to appropriate use categories as the basis for management decisions.

Encourage public/volunteer involvement in the management of cultural resources by establishing site stewardship and other programs.

Specific plans would be developed for culturally sensitive areas unless included in other integrated activity plans. Such plans would include protective measures, Native American Consultation, and regulatory compliance. These plans would also include but not be limited to developing a site monitoring system; identifying sites in need of stabilization, restoration, and protective measures (e.g., fences, surveillance equipment); developing research designs for selected sites/areas; designating sites/areas for interpretive development; identifying areas for cultural inventory where federal undertakings are expected to occur; and developing specific mitigation measures. The plan would designate sites, districts, landmarks, and landscapes that would be nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Limit land-disturbing activities within selected Native American traditional cultural and religious sites for continued use by Tribes. Traditional cultural sites would be selected in consultation with interested Tribes and communities.

Consult with Tribes for the protection of areas and items of traditional life-ways and religious significance that includes but is not limited to burials, rock art, traditional use areas, religiously active areas, and sacred sites.

Pursue appropriate National Register designation, including but not limited to currently eligible sites under current policy and guidance.

Conduct an inventory according to professional standards commensurate with the land use activity, environmental conditions, and the potential for cultural resources.

Pro-actively reduce hazardous fuels or mitigate the potential hazard around archaeological and cultural sites that are susceptible to destruction by fire from prescribed fire activities.

Conduct consultation process to identify both the resource management concerns and the strategies for addressing them through an interactive dialogue with appropriate Native American communities.

Reduce or eliminate imminent threats from natural or human-caused deterioration or conflict with other resource uses.

Identify priority geographic areas for new field inventory based upon a probability for unrecorded significant resources.

Ensure that all authorizations for land and resource use would comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, consistent with and subject to the objectives established in the RMP for the proactive use of cultural properties in the public interest.

BLM, in coordination with the appropriate county, would continue to identify, evaluate, and nominate historic roads and trails for inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places.

When new sites are discovered, interim protection may be applied, if warranted.

Provide for legitimate field research by qualified scientists and institutions.

Allow for reconstruction, stabilization, maintenance, and interpretation of selected sites for public enjoyment and education.

Continue to implement, maintain, and revise as necessary the Nine-Mile Canyon Recreation/Cultural Management Plan that includes developing interpretive facilities at appropriate archeological and cultural sites at Nine-Mile Canyon in cooperation with the Price Field Office, the Nine-Mile coalition team, and the counties.

Promote collaborative partnerships to assist in meeting management goals and objectives for cultural resources.

Should National Register-eligible cultural resources be found during an inventory, impacts to them would be mitigated, generally through avoidance. Should it be determined the cultural resources cannot be avoided; consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) would be initiated. A program on mitigation would be developed via consultation between VFO, the SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

VFO would continue to allocate cultural sites, including ethnographic properties, to one of six management categories: experimental, discharged, public, scientific, traditional, and conservation.

Implement regular patrols as feasible to monitor and protect known cultural sites.

Establish and implement protective measures for sites, structures, objects, and traditional use areas that are important to Tribes with historical and cultural connections to the land, in order to maintain the view shed, intrinsic values, and the auditory, visual, and esthetic settings of the

resources. Protection measures for undisturbed cultural resources and their natural setting would be developed in compliance with regulatory mandates and Native American consultation.

Nominate eligible sites, districts, landscapes, and traditional cultural properties for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Manage National Register listed and eligible sites for their local, regional, and national significance.

2.4.3.2.1 John Jarvie Historic Site

Revise the 1989 plan for John Jarvie Historic Site to provide for:

1. maintaining the integrity of the National Historic District through reconstruction, stabilization and restoration of important cultural features and the elimination or separation of other features that are not culturally significant;
2. providing adequate protection and management of site; and
3. managing the site for public education and enjoyment by developing educational and interpretive programs and keeping the site open for public viewing during normal visitor use periods.

2.4.4 Fire Management

A National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)-compliant Fire Management Plan (FMP) was completed for the VPA in 1996. The FMP reflects the goals and objectives for vegetation management and fire's role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and is incorporated into this EIS. The FMP was amended in 2000 to include a Risk Assessment Management Strategy (RAMS) that outlines the fuels projects for the next five years. RAMS provides a consistent process for developing prevention and fuels management programs. RAMS allows users to prioritize areas within their planning unit, consider various prevention and/or fuels treatment alternatives, and develop a budget.

2.4.4.1 Goals and Objectives

Firefighter safety and public safety would be the first priority in every fire management activity. Property values and critical resource values would be the next priority.

The primary goal and objective of fire management is to help restore natural systems to their proper functioning condition by restoring fire to its legitimate role in the ecosystem, including managing wildland fire for other resource benefits.

2.4.4.2 Actions Common to All

All alternatives would attempt to restore natural fire regimes in fire dependent/adapted ecosystems primarily through the use of prescribed fire and managed wildland fire. Where social and/or resource constraints preclude or limit the use of fire, mechanical and/or chemical treatments would be used.

The Fire Management Plan and RAMS would be updated and amended to meet the direction and objectives of the RMP. The FMP would be revised to comply with the Interagency Template for Fire Management Plans and would identify Fire Management Units (FMUs) that describe the mix of management activities that can be used to meet the desired future conditions and land use objectives.

2.4.4.2.1 Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

For wildland urban interface (WUI) areas, the objective would be to reduce hazardous fuels adjacent to these at-risk areas through mechanical, prescribed fire, or chemical treatments, or a combination thereof. In partnership with the State of Utah and the counties, the BLM would develop WUI Projects.

2.4.4.2.2 Hazardous Fuels

Hazardous fuel reduction activities would be implemented primarily through the use of prescribed fire and managed wildland fire. In some cases, chemical and/or mechanical treatments would be used in conjunction with fire. Where social and/or resource constraints preclude the use of fire, mechanical and/or chemical treatments would be used.

Criteria for developing hazardous fuel reduction priorities would consist of the following:

A. areas of Fire Regime Condition Class 2 and 3;
B. areas where the potential risk of losing keystone ecosystem species is present; and
C. areas where threats to private/public property exist.

All fire-management planning activities would comply with the National Fire Plan, including the streamlined Section 7 Consultation procedures.

Fire Regime and Condition Classes for the VPA have been designated and mapped (Figures 3 and 4 respectively). The FMP would be updated and amended to meet the direction of the Vernal RMP and adjusted to meet the Department of the Interior's Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

In partnership with the State of Utah and the counties, the BLM would develop WUI Projects.

The VFO would implement the Risk Assessment Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).

The VPA is divided into fire management categories. Fire suppression activities and the Appropriate Management Response (AMR) would be implemented through the guidance developed under the ABCD polygons as outlined in Handbook-1601. Criteria used in development of the categories were determined through an Interdisciplinary Team of resource specialists. Criteria for each category is described below:

- **Category A –** Areas where unplanned fire is not desired at all.

  This category includes the salt desert shrub vegetation type where the risk of cheatgrass invasion is high following fire events. Also included are the major river corridors where fire results in the loss of Fremont cottonwood, a keystone species in present decline. Other constraints to fire management activities include cultural resource sites, high recreational use, and highly developed oil and gas fields.

- **Category B –** Areas where unplanned fire is not desired because of current conditions.

  Prescribed fire use is allowed to obtain resource management objectives; mechanical/chemical treatments would be utilized where social and/or resource constraints preclude the use of prescribed fire.

  This category includes the five identified WUI areas for the VFO, including adjacent urban interfaces, cultural resources, crucial deer winter range, and crucial sage grouse habitat. Within this habitat, Wyoming sagebrush is identified as a keystone species,

which has been in a continual state of decline due to widespread drought and invasive species encroachment.

- **Category C –** Areas where wildland fire is desired. Prescribed fire is allowed and may be extensive to obtain resource management objectives; mechanical/chemical treatments would be utilized where social and/or resource constraints preclude the use of prescribed fire.

  This category contains the pinyon-juniper vegetation type, along with aspen/douglas fir, mountain browse, and non-crucial areas of sagebrush. Other constraints to fire management activities include a limited amount of oil and gas development, non-critical sage grouse habitat, a limited amount of T&E species habitat, and a limited amount of cultural resources.

- **Category D –** Areas where wildland fire is desired, and there are few or no constraints for its use.

  This category contains all of the existing Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) within the VFO, non-critical sage grouse habitat, a limited amount of T&E species habitat, and a limited amount of cultural resources.

HAZARDOUS FUEL TARGETS			
Category	**Prescribed Fire (acres)**	**Mechanical (acres)**	**Chemical (acres)**
Category A	1,000	5,000	5,000
Category B	19,570	10,000	10,000
Category C	82,738	20,000	20,000
Category D	53,117	0	0

WILDLAND FIRE USE TARGETS	
Category	**Acres**
Category C	75,000
Category D	30,000

ALLOWABLE WILDLAND FIRE ACRES BURNED PER DECADE	
Category	**Acres**
Category A	2,100
Category B	21,000
Category C	151,500
Category D	30,000

WUI areas within the VFO area have been identified in RAMS. These are communities/ developed areas that are located within the vicinity of federal lands and are at risk from potential

wildland fire events. The intent is to reduce the hazardous fuels adjacent to these at-risk areas through mechanical, prescribed, or chemical fire or a combination of these treatments. The priority areas identified for WUI projects are Dry Fork, Diamond Mountain, Deep Creek, Browns Park, and Deadman Bench.

2.4.4.2.3 Emergency Stabilization and Restoration

Following any wildland fire event, the VPA manager would select an Interdisciplinary Emergency Stabilization and Restoration (ESR) team that would evaluate any burned areas to determine if ESR treatments are needed. ESR treatments would follow the procedures outlined in BLM Manual Handbook H-1742-1 (including supplemental guidance dated 11/27/2002). If the interdisciplinary team determined that ESR treatments were necessary, the team would develop an ESR plan with site-specific measures designed to minimize resource losses, both on-and – off site, following the wildfire. Consideration would be given to sensitive resource values in preparation of the ESR plan, including WSAs, special emphasis areas, critical soils, cultural resources, and special status species habitat. ESR treatments may include, but would not be limited to seeding, seedbed preparation practices, fencing, chemical applications, water retention structures, and control of livestock, wild horses, and wildlife grazing. Site specific ESR plans would be tiered to the existing Normal Fire Year Rehabilitation Plan for the VPA.

Criteria for developing ESR actions would consist of:

1. areas where the risk of imminent soil loss is high;
2. areas that contain T&E Species or state sensitive species habitat; and
3. areas that contain municipal watersheds; and
4. areas where there is a high potential for invasive species establishment.

2.4.5 Forage

2.4.5.1 Goals and Objectives

Maintain or improve the total forage resource using techniques that are compatible with the use and development of other resources and which would meet or exceed Utah BLM Rangeland Health Standards.

2.4.5.2 Actions Common to All

Monitoring would be used to determine the amount of forage available for livestock, wildlife and wild horses. Results of monitoring would be used to adapt management strategies to prevent deterioration of rangelands, to achieve desired resource conditions, and to meet other resource objectives.

Any adjustment in forage assignments to either livestock or wildlife would be based on analysis of monitoring data including long-term vegetation trend, actual use, climate, and utilization. Additionally forage would not be allocated in areas where forage production is less than 25 lbs. Per acre which equates to 32 acres per AUM. Areas that are seldom or never grazed by livestock due to physical factors such as slopes greater than 50% and area that are in excess of four miles from water would not be included in the livestock forage allocation. An exception for areas in excess of four miles of water if water is hauled or the area would be grazed when snow is on the

ground. Adjustments would involve permittees and would be implemented through documented mutual agreement or decision.

Increases or reductions associated with monitoring of base allocations would be evaluated against the established grazing permits, UDWR herd unit objectives, and wild horse Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) to determine needed adjustments to animal numbers, adjustments in seasons of use, etc. Unless specified elsewhere in the plan, changes in forage allocation would be as follows:

1. When all other management options have been exhausted and it is determined that rangeland standards are not being met, reductions would be made to the species of grazing animal shown to be causing the problem.
2. If additional forage is determined to be available, it would be proportionally allocated to grazing animals according to their dietary need or would be allocated to watershed, riparian, or other resource values, unless specified elsewhere in the plan.
3. Increases in available forage resulting from conservation practices; improved range condition; or development of improvements by the livestock permittee, DWR, or other organizations, would be credited to that entity unless specified elsewhere in the plan.

Should a permittee apply for restoration of suspended use, it would only be considered if:

1. the allotment/s is/are being grazed at full permitted use in order to adequately assess the carrying capacity of the range resource;
2. adequate monitoring data is in place to assess AUMs; and
3. a signed agreement is in place that outlines at least a subsequent five-year monitoring protocol.

A permittee would voluntarily relinquish a grazing permit (active and suspended use). Relinquished grazing permits would be devoted or allocated to another public purpose after completion of an appropriate evaluation and analysis. Any decision to retire livestock grazing on federal lands would not be permanent and such action would be subject to reconsideration and reversal during subsequent land use planning.

AUMs would be adjusted downward for livestock, wildlife, or wild horses (or any combination thereof) when monitoring shows that rangeland objectives are not being met and that the long-term forage availability is not adequate to support the permitted uses.

If it is determined through monitoring that livestock grazing is beneficial to other resource values, it would be allowed on 16 miles of river corridor along the Upper Green River in Browns Park following an adequate evaluation and assessment. If such use is allowed, it would be of short duration and would not detract from recreation and/or riparian values along the river.

Grazing preference is retired on the following allotments: Red Creek Flat, Taylor Flat, Watson, Rye Grass, Marshall Draw, South Warren Draw, Sears Canyon, and Crouse Reservoir. Applications for livestock grazing would only be approved on a non-renewable, short duration basis following an adequate evaluation and assessment to determine if it would enhance wildlife values.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) would voluntarily relinquish their grazing permits when the Vernal RMP becomes effective. Active AUMS permitted to TNC (4,239) and RMEF (4,025) would be allocated to wildlife. Ranchers

other than TNC and RMEF also have permits in the allotments where these AUMS are relinquished; they would continue to graze cattle in accordance with their permitted use.

2.4.6 Lands and Realty

Federal public land laws and implementing regulations enable the BLM to engage in and complete realty actions involving acquisition, use, disposal, and adjustment of land resources and maintenance of historic records for these transactions.

2.4.6.1 Goals and Objectives

Accommodate community growth and development when it is determined that it is in compliance with other goals and objectives of the plan.

Improve management opportunities for resource protection, resource development, or administration of public lands.

Manage public lands to support goals and objectives of other resources programs, respond to public requests for land use authorizations, and acquire administrative and public access where necessary.

Dispose of lands that are effectively unmanageable due to size, location, etc.

Acquire lands that would enhance management objectives of this RMP.

While BLM has attempted to identify specific tracts to be available for land tenure adjustments, the RMP recognizes the potential for other tracts of public land not specifically identified in the plan that may meet Land Tenure Adjustment (LTA) criteria. BLM would consider land tenure adjustments if they are found to be in compliance with the RMP.

2.4.6.2 Actions Common to All

Consider new major communication sites on an as-needed basis.

Acquisitions, exchanges, easements, or disposals would be considered, using LTA criteria on a case-by-case basis, between willing buyers and sellers.

BLM would retain lands within its administrative jurisdiction, except where necessary to accomplish one or more of the following objectives: improve management of natural resources through consolidation of federal, state and private lands; secure key property necessary to protect special status species, including threatened and endangered species, promote biological diversity, increase recreational opportunities, and preserve archaeological, paleontological and historical resources; and, implement specific acquisitions authorized by Acts of Congress by acquiring minimal non-federal lands or interest in lands.

When opportunities occur, acquire isolated tracts of non-federal land from willing sellers within special management areas to consolidate ownership and eliminate non-federal in-holdings.

The following criteria would be used when evaluating proposed land use authorizations:

- Land use authorizations would not be approved in exclusion areas.
- Land use authorizations in avoidance areas may be authorized provided they are considered consistent with the current management objectives; those that are not would either be rejected or would necessitate a plan amendment prior to approval.

- Habitat for listed T&E species would be retained in federal ownership. Exceptions may be considered in exchanges with the State of Utah and others with consultation and concurrence with the USFWS.

2.4.6.2.1 Transportation/Utility Corridors

This RMP recognizes existing right-of-way (ROW) corridors including the Western Utility Group (WUG) updates to the Western Regional Corridor Study (Figure 6), and would designate additional corridors subject to physical barriers and sensitive resource values.

These approved corridors are the preferred location for future major linear ROWs which meet the following criteria:

- pipelines with a diameter of 16 inches or greater;
- transmission lines (not distribution) with a voltage capacity of 69 kV or greater;
- paved roads or roads consisting of more than two lanes; and
- significant canals, ditches, or conduits requiring a permanent width greater than 50 feet.

Major linear ROWs meeting the above thresholds that are proposed outside of the designated corridors would require a plan amendment.

2.4.6.2.2 Rights-of-Way (ROWs)/Easements

All future ROW applications involving projects that are less than the major project thresholds described above would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Future ROWs would be consolidated in corridors where reasonable and economically feasible.

Future ROWs that cross the lower or upper Green River would be placed in the Four Mile Bottom Area or at the Head of Little Swallow Canyon.

Generally, future ROWs would be located adjacent to existing roads/trails and within existing R/W granted routes, when facilities are compatible, as much as possible.

Easements would be acquired from willing landowners to gain access to public lands.

Lands are also available for major water development ROWs on a case-by-case basis with special restrictions depending on the scope of the project and resource concerns identified during the processing of any project proposal in compliance with NEPA. Major ROW projects such as hydroelectric dam and wind farm ROWs may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if the project is consistent with the goals and objectives or other land management prescriptions; provided such projects are processed through a plan amendment.

2.4.6.2.3 Trespass Resolution

Intentional trespass resolution would be limited to removal and/ or restoration as appropriate. Unintentional trespass resolution may include: 1) authorization under ROW grant, commercial/agricultural lease, or permit; 2) disposal of the affected land through sale or exchange; or 3) removal, depending on the nature of the trespass. In all such trespass cases, administrative costs incurred by the BLM for investigating and resolving trespasses will be collected. All trespass incidents resolved by issuance of ROW grants, leases, or permits would be subject to payment by the holder/lessee/permittee of rent based on market value. Trespass cases

resolved by land sales would be based on fair market value, and land exchanges would be completed on an equal value basis.

2.4.6.2.4 Withdrawals

Review existing withdrawals and classifications on BLM-administered lands on a case-by- case basis to determine their need and consistency with the intent of the withdrawals in accordance with section 204(l) of FLPMA, and recommend continuing, modifying, or terminating as applicable (Figure 6).

Any lands becoming unencumbered by withdrawals or classifications would be managed according to the decisions made in this RMP. If the RMP has not identified management prescriptions for these lands, they would be managed in a manner consistent with adjacent or comparable public lands within the planning area. If the unencumbered lands fall within two or more management scenarios where future-planning criteria may not be clear, a plan amendment may be required.

2.4.6.2.5 Land Tenure Adjustments (LTAs)

Land ownership changes would be considered on lands not specifically identified in the RMP (Figure 6) for disposal or acquisition if the changes are in accordance with resource management objectives and other RMP decisions, determined to be in the public interest, and would accomplish one or more of the following criteria:

1. the changes are determined to be in the public interest. The public would benefit from land resources coming into public ownership, while at the same time accommodating the needs of local and state governments, including the needs for public purposes, community growth and the economy.
2. the changes result in a gain of important manageable resources on public lands such as crucial wildlife habitat, significant cultural sites, mineral resources, water sources, listed species by habitat, or areas key to productive ecosystems;
3. the changes ensure public access to lands in areas where access is needed and cannot otherwise be obtained;
4. the changes would promote more effective management and meet essential resource objectives through land ownership consolidation; or
5. the changes result in acquisition of lands that serve regional or national priorities identified in applicable policy directives or legislation.

If one or more of the above criteria are not met, proposed land ownership changes outside of designated transfer areas would not be approved or would require a plan amendment.

Non-federal lands located within sensitive areas would be acquired through donation, purchase, or land exchange. Land acquisitions would be negotiated from willing landowners.

Acquire fee title or interest in non-federal lands (e.g., water rights, scenic easements, greater sage-grouse leks) with priority placed on lands with critical resource values.

No lands would be classified or opened for agricultural entry or leasing in the RMP planning area.

2.4.6.2.6 Disposals

Public lands within the VFO would be considered for disposal through methods such as sale, exchange, state indemnity selection, and Recreation and Public Purpose Act patent or as directed by special legislation. All disposal actions would be coordinated with adjoining landowners, local governments, and current land users. Approximately 35,462 acres of public lands for disposal are identified in Figure 6.

2.4.6.2.7 Sales

Any lands to be disposed of by sale that are not identified in this RMP would require a plan amendment. Land sales would reserve all minerals as required by FLPMA.

However, if the public lands have no known mineral values, the mineral estate would be disposed of pursuant to the authority of Section 209(b) of FLPMA.

In instances where the surface estate is already in private ownership and the mineral estate is reserved to the U.S., the surface owner may purchase the reserved mineral estate, provided that the criteria under 43 CFR 2720 are met.

Lands identified for consideration for disposal would be used for a variety of other authorized activities, based on the need for future community growth and development.

2.4.6.2.8 Exchanges/Acquisitions

Public lands would be considered for disposal by exchange provided the exchange would result in more efficient federal management of the public lands. Land exchanges would be based on fair market value determined for the federal and non-federal lands as defined in Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Acquisitions and by current BLM policy.

Non-federal lands would be considered for acquisition through exchange of suitable public land, on a case-by-case basis, where acquisition of the non-federal lands would contain resource values equal to or greater than the public lands being exchanged.

Exchanges with the State of Utah would be given a priority consideration. There are a significant number of state land sections administered by the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) scattered throughout the RMP area. Many of these State lands are in-holdings located within designated resource management areas identified in this RMP. SITLA has indicated their desire to exchange SITLA lands within these BLM management areas for BLM-administered lands elsewhere in the RMP area. BLM recognizes the opportunity for mutually beneficial land tenure adjustments and would apply the RMP Land Tenure Adjustment Criteria.

Non-federal lands to be acquired through both Bureau- and public-initiated exchanges must have at least one of the following characteristics:

- acquisition would facilitate access to public lands and resources and/or contribute to a more efficient and manageable land ownership pattern;
- acquisition would facilitate implementation of the RMP management actions; or
- acquisition of the non-federal lands would maintain or enhance public uses and values, with priority given to acquiring riparian/wetlands; lands with high recreation use and/or

wildlife values; sensitive plant or animal habitat; and lands with significant cultural sites and/or paleontological localities or within other special designations.

- Acquisitions that would meet other conditions pursuant to FLPMA Section 206 or 43 CFR 2200.

Acquired lands would be managed in accordance with management objectives identified for adjacent lands unless resource considerations require a plan amendment.

2.4.6.2.9 Other Methods of Acquisition

In addition to acquiring non-federal lands through land exchanges, VFO would acquire lands by direct purchase utilizing programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), when funding is available, donation, or legal settlement. Such land would be vested in the U.S. in perpetuity unless otherwise directed by Bureau or Congressional policy.

2.4.6.2.10 Recreation and Public Purpose Act (R&PP)

Lands conveyed to state or local governments or non-profit organizations under the Recreation and Public Purpose Act (R&PP) Act may include those identified in LTAs. In addition, requests for lands other than those identified would be considered for disposal provided the proposed use would provide a greater public benefit than that which the current management provides, and that the action is otherwise consistent with this RMP. Examples may include, but are not limited to local government or non-profit recreational and public purpose facilities such as public shooting ranges, landfills, motor-cross, and racetracks, etc. Other authorizations for disposal include the Airport and Airway Improvement Act, Color-of-Title Act, State selections under the Enabling Act, and other lesser-used authorities.

2.4.6.2.11 Easements

Acquire public access to approximately 70,700 public acres for recreational purposes identified as follows:

2.4.6.2.11.1 High Priority

Ashley Creek drainages, White River, Jackson Draw, Warren Draw, Allen Draw, Red Mountain, Wild Mountain-South Pot Creek, Spring Creek, Nine Mile, Red Mountain East and West, and Moon Shine area.

2.4.6.2.11.2 Moderate Priority

Horseshoe Bend, Argyle Ridge, Jensen Canyon, Little Sulfur Canyon, Ashley Creek Recreation Site, Hoy Mountain, Dead Horse Draw, and Blue Mountain.

2.4.6.2.11.3 Low Priority

Sears Canyon, Marshall Draw, West Little Mountain, and East Nine-Mile Canyon.

2.4.6.2.12 Fencing Requirements for Paved Highways

All applications to pave roads would be evaluated to determine the need for fencing. Applicants receiving a ROW grant would be required to fence the road if it is determined necessary to protect human and livestock health and safety.

2.4.7 Livestock and Grazing Management

2.4.7.1 Goals and Objectives

Achieve appropriate utilization of the range by livestock, wildlife, and wild horses through management prescriptions and administrative adjustments.

2.4.7.2 Seasons of Use

Prior to approving changes in permitted seasons of use, the following would be mandatory:

1. compliance with the standards for range management (see Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management for BLM Lands in Utah, May 1997);
2. preparation, signature, and implementation of a monitoring plan;
3. signature of permittee accepting the grazing management practices determined necessary by the Authorized Officer to approve the change; and
4. agreement by permittee to management practices that provide for the physiological requirements of desired plants.

Requests from a permittee to change seasons of use would be a priority if all of the following criteria were met:

- changes enhance or meet resource objectives contained in the Vernal RMP;
- allotment/s are scheduled for assessment the same year a request is made; and
- funding for the assessment is provided by sources other than BLM.

Develop management plans and/or grazing agreements for livestock allotments to allow flexibility in grazing management, which may include consolidation of allotments, change in seasons of use, and reduction and/or consolidation of grazing allotments and pastures (Figures 7-10).

Livestock permittees with allotments within Herd Management Areas would be required to have a current health certificate including documentation of annual vaccinations for infectious diseases for all horses, mules, or burros used in their grazing operation.

2.4.7.3 Criteria for Changing Class of Livestock

Requests from permittees to convert class of livestock would be handled as follows:

- On crucial deer winter ranges, cattle are preferred.
- In areas where fencing would be required, conversion would be contingent upon signed fence agreement and fences would be in place prior to issuance of permit to graze. The applicant/s requesting the conversion would be responsible to fund the fencing and cattle guards/gates and to construct and maintain fences. (Consistent with Vernal District

Grazing Advisory Board and Vernal BLM joint Rangeland Improvement (RI) Policy. Date 12/08/1992).

- In areas where grazing would be along paved roads, evaluate and determine the need for fencing. Applicants would be required to fence the road if it is determined necessary to protect human and livestock health and safety.
- Conversions to cattle would not be allowed in wild horse herd management areas.
- Areas with riverine/lotic systems may require additional management actions such as, but not limited to, fencing of streams.
- Conversions would not be allowed in WSAs if fencing or other structural improvements are necessary or if the conversion would result in significant resource conflicts or impacts.

2.4.7.4 Grazing in River Corridors

As opportunities arise, such as voluntary relinquishment, consider discontinuing livestock use.

Where livestock conflicts with other uses of the river, mitigate through management or other actions.

Identify criteria for acceptable levels of livestock grazing use along river bottoms. (See Riparian section.)

If grazing is causing resource degradation, and all other options have been exhausted, temporarily close those riparian areas that do not satisfactorily respond to changes in management.

2.4.8 Minerals and Energy Resources

2.4.8.1 Goals and Objectives

Continue to meet local and national non-renewable and renewable energy and other public mineral needs. Ensure a viable long-term mineral industry related to energy development while providing reasonable and necessary protections to other resources.

The following principles would be applied:

1. encourage and facilitate the development by private industry of public land mineral resources in a manner that satisfies national and local needs and provides for economical and environmentally sound exploration, extraction and reclamation practices;
2. process applications, permits, operating plans, mineral exchanges, leases, and other use authorizations for public lands in accordance with policy and guidance; and
3. monitor salable and leasable mineral operations to ensure proper resource recovery and evaluation, production verification, diligence, and inspection and enforcement of contract sales, common use areas, community pits, free use permits, leases and prospecting permits.

The plan would recognize and be consistent with the National Energy Policy by:

1. recognizing the need for diversity in obtaining energy supplies;
2. encouraging conservation of sensitive resource values; and

3. improving energy distribution opportunities.

2.4.8.2 Actions Common to All

2.4.8.2.1 Oil and Gas

Approximately 188,500 acres of split estate lands (federal minerals-Tribal surface) within the Hill Creek Extension of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation would be available for leasing. Measures would be developed to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts that may result from federally authorized mineral lease activities (Figures 11-14).

Approximately 53,111 acres within the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge would be closed to oil and gas leasing.

Mitigation of oil and gas impacts developed under the plan and applied to leases in the form of stipulations would adhere to BLM's standard format. Stipulations generally reflect the minimum requirements necessary to protect the resource and would contain provisions/criteria to allow for waiver and modification if warranted.

The plan would provide for a variety of mineral and geophysical explorations. These activities would be allowed in the planning area unless precluded by other program prescriptions. The stipulations identified for oil and gas operations in Appendix L would generally apply to these activities.

2.4.8.2.2 Locatable

Operations on lands open to mineral entry (as well as on claim locations which pre-date withdrawal) must be conducted in compliance with the 43 CFR 3809 (surface management) regulations. The three level of operations under these regulations include casual use, notice and, plan of operation. A plan would have to be filed for operations usually conducted under notice in:

1. areas in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and areas designated for potential addition to the system;
2. designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs);
3. areas designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and administered by BLM;
4. areas designated as "closed" to OHV use as defined in 43 CFR 8340-5;
5. any lands or waters known to contain federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species or their proposed or designated critical habitat; and
6. National Monuments and National Conservation Areas administered by BLM; see 43 CFR 3809.11(c).

2.4.8.2.3 Mineral Materials

All existing material sites would be evaluated to determine continual need and ensure that they are accommodating user needs.

Common use areas, community pits, free-use permits, competitive and non-competitive contract sales, and testing and sampling of mineral materials may be authorized by BLM in "open" areas.

2.4.8.2.4 Alternative Energy

The plan would recognize the opportunity for alternative energy development such as wind, solar, and geothermal.

Individual proposals would be evaluated based on conformance with other program goals and objectives stated in the plan.

2.4.9 Paleontology

2.4.9.1 Goals and Objectives

Locate, evaluate, and manage paleontological resources, and protect them where appropriate. Facilitate suitable scientific, educational, and recreational uses of fossils. Ensure that significant fossils are not inadvertently damaged, destroyed, or removed from public ownership as a result of surface disturbance or land exchanges. Foster public awareness and appreciation of the area's paleontological heritage.

2.4.9.2 Actions Common to All

Recreational collectors may collect and retain reasonable amounts of common invertebrate and plant fossils for personal, non-commercial use. Surface disturbance must be negligible, and mechanized tools may not be used.

Vertebrate fossils may be collected only under a permit issued to qualified individuals. Vertebrate fossils include bones, teeth, eggs, and other body parts of animals with backbones such as dinosaurs, fish, turtles, and mammals. Vertebrate fossils also include trace fossils, such as footprints, burrows and dung.

Fossils collected under a permit remain the property of the federal government and must be placed in a suitable repository (such as a museum or university) identified at the time of permit issuance.

Lands identified for disposal or exchange would be evaluated to determine whether such actions would remove significant fossils from federal ownership. In areas where surface disturbance, either initiated by BLM or by other land users, may threaten significant fossils, BLM would follow its policy (see Manual and Handbook 8270-1) to assess any threat and mitigate damage.

BLM would work with local communities, interest groups, individuals, and other agencies to enhance the public's understanding and enjoyment of paleontological resources.

Where scientifically significant fossils are threatened by natural hazards or unauthorized collection, BLM would work with permittees and other partners to salvage specimens and reduce future threats to resources at risk.

Implement regular patrols as feasible to protect areas where unauthorized use may occur.

Modify the existing General Agreement between the VFO, the NPS, the Vernal Field House of Natural History, and the Friends of Paleontology Chapter to encourage protection of paleontological resources planning-area wide. The modified agreement would ensure proper storage and curation of paleontological resources and include methods to promote interpretation and education.

2.4.10 Rangeland Improvements

2.4.10.1 Goals and Objectives

Restore, maintain and/or improve rangeland conditions and productivity while providing for its use and development. Maintain, improve, and/or restore habitat for wildlife; provide optimum forage for livestock; maintain healthy watersheds and vegetation communities; and promote sustained yield and multiple use.

2.4.10.2 Actions Common to All

Specific improvements to rangeland health would include, but are not limited to, vegetation treatments, fencing, spring development, reservoirs, guzzlers, pipelines, and wells.

2.4.11 Recreation

2.4.11.1 Goals and Objectives

Ensure the continued availability of quality outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences that are not readily available from other sources; protect the health and safety of visitors; protect natural, cultural, and other resources; encourage public enjoyment of public lands; and enhance recreational opportunities.

Work collaboratively with affected user groups and organizations, state and local officials, and other interested parties to provide for site-specific or area-specific comprehensive integrated activity level planning.

Assure there is a spectrum of recreation opportunities and settings through comprehensive integrated activity level planning. Such plans would include, but are not limited to the following:

- Recreation use allocations
- Group size or seasonal limitations
- Opportunities for dispersed or organized camping, including large events
- Facility development
- Opportunities for interpretation or other signage
- Campfire restrictions
- Establish limits of acceptable change or other environmental indicators in order to provide for adaptive management

2.4.11.2 Actions Common to All

Continue to implement public education and environmental awareness programs such as Tread Lightly and the Leave No Trace.

Continue to manage 1,020 acres at Pelican Lake as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Manage as No Surface Occupancy (NSO) for oil and gas and close to mineral materials sales.

Manage 24,285 acres in Red Mountain-Dry Fork as a SRMA to provide for maintenance and development of OHV or non-OHV trails, minimal facilities necessary for human health and safety, watershed values, relict vegetation communities, and crucial deer and elk winter habitat.

Areas not managed as SRMAs would be managed for dispersed recreational uses that require minimum facility development. Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) would continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis. All proposed applications for permits would be evaluated to determine compliance with the goals and objectives of this plan.

Motorized vehicles would be allowed to travel on a single path up to 300 feet from designated routes to access a camp. BLM would monitor dispersed camping activities and would work with user groups to address adverse environmental conditions if warranted. If use is such that undue environmental impacts are taking place, BLM would close and rehabilitate damaged areas. If monitoring indicates that developed camping is needed, BLM would evaluate the viability of developed campsites.

Establish signed pull-off wildlife viewing areas along the Book Cliffs Divide Ridge Road.

Develop comprehensive activity plans for Blue Mountain, Fantasy Canyon, and Pelican Lake. These plans would address appropriate levels of use and facility development.

Continue to implement the 1979 Green River Management Plan for Desolation and Gray Canyons to protect the Desolation Canyon National Historic Landmark within VFO and the Upper Green Recreation Management Plan to provide appropriate use levels while protecting other resources.

The Upper Green River from Little Hole to the Colorado state line would limit all surface-disturbing activities within line of sight up to one-half mile, unless related to recreational infrastructure support.

All developed recreation sites within VFO would be closed to the shooting of firearms and all forms of surface-disturbing activities.

The Dry Fork Canyon Recreation Area would be restricted to day use only and closed to the shooting of firearms.

Developed recreation sites would be closed to grazing and surface-disturbing activities not directly related to recreation development.

Special recreation permit holders using horses in connection with their operation within Herd Management Areas would be required to have them tested for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA).

Special recreation permit holders using horses from out of state would be required to test them for EIA per state law.

If cave resources are identified on public lands, then the VFO would develop a cave management plan that results in appropriate management to protect them from damage.

Maintain or expand infrastructure of all recreational sites including, but not limited to, cabins, restrooms, campsites, and trail head development and ensure their safety for public use.

Stabilize and preserve Chipeta, Trujillo, Moonshine, and Rat Hole cabins.

2.4.11.2.1 BLM Recreation Guidelines

The following recreation management guidelines were developed to help achieve and maintain healthy public lands as defined by the Rangeland Health Standards. They are listed below with the standard that they apply to.

Rangeland Health Standard 1 – Upland soils exhibit permeability and infiltration rates that sustain or improve site productivity, considering the soil type, climate, and landform.

1. Designate areas for intensive recreational use or cross-country motorized travel where disturbance of soil and vegetation is acceptable, either because impacts are insignificant and/or temporary or because the value of intensive use of the land outweighs whatever ecological changes may occur. Decisions on such designation should take into account conflicts with other users as well as adverse effects on archaeological or historical sites, T&E species habitat, wildlife habitat, or social values such as beauty, solitude, and quiet.
2. In all other areas, travel routes and other disturbances should be kept to the minimum necessary to provide access and visitor facilities appropriate to the area. Through blocking, signing, and public education, unneeded travel routes should be eliminated and rehabilitated and unplanned development of new ones discouraged.
3. It may be necessary to manage some areas to be entirely free of planned travel routes.

Rangeland Health Standard 2 – Riparian and wetland areas are in properly functioning condition. Stream channel morphology and functions are appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.

1. Where feasible, and consistent with user safety, developed travel routes should be located/relocated away from sensitive riparian and wetland areas.
2. Camping in riparian areas should be avoided and must be managed, monitored, and modified as conditions dictate to reduce vegetation disturbance and sedimentation.
3. Stream crossings would be limited to the number dictated by the topography, geology, and soil type. Design any necessary stream crossings to minimize sedimentation, soil erosion, and compaction.

Rangeland Health Standard 3 – Desired species, including native, T&E and special status species, are maintained at a level appropriate for the site and species involved.

1. Protect against the establishment and/or spread of noxious or other weeds from intensive recreation, including the use of riding and pack animals, hiking, motorized, or other mechanized vehicles.
2. Conduct an educational campaign to inform recreational users about the damage caused by noxious weeds and how their spread can be minimized.
3. Where appropriate, apply restrictions, i.e., do not permit surface-disturbing activities.
4. Protect wildlife and plant and/or habitat by:
    a. preserving connectivity and avoiding fragmentation;
    b. controlling recreational activities that would interfere with critical wildlife stages such as nesting, reproduction, or seasonal concentration areas; and
    c. avoiding creation of artificial attractions such as the feeding of wild animals or improper disposal of garbage.

5. Where necessary, control recreational use by changing location or kind of activity, season, intensity, distribution, and/or duration in order to protect plant and animal communities, especially those containing special status species, including listed T&E or candidate species.

Rangeland Health Standard 4 – BLM would apply and comply with water quality standards established by the State of Utah (R. 317-2) and the federal Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts. Activities on BLM lands would fully support the designated beneficial uses described in the Utah Water Quality Standards (R. 317-2) for surface water and groundwater.

1. Manage recreational uses in coordination with other uses on public lands to comply with applicable water quality standards by:
   a. identifying areas where recreational activities may seriously impair water quality and
   b. establishing thresholds for numbers, types, and duration of visitor use, and when those thresholds are reached, by developing facilities and/or possibly limiting or relocating use.
2. Monitor and control disposal of human or domestic animal waste, trash, and other pollutants to prevent serious impairment of water quality.

2.4.11.2.2 Light and Sound

The BLM would seek to minimize light and sound pollution within the planning area using best available technology such as installation of multi-cylinder pumps, hospital sound-reducing mufflers, and placement of exhaust systems to direct noise away from noise sensitive areas, e.g., sensitive habitat, campgrounds, river corridors, and Dinosaur National Monument. Light pollution would be mitigated by using methods such as limiting height of light poles, timing of lighting operations (meaning limiting lighting to times of darkness associated with drilling and work over or maintenance operations), limiting wattage intensity, and constructing light shields. If a determination is made that natural barriers or view sheds would meet these mitigation objectives, the above requirements may not apply.

BLM-contracted fixed wing and helicopter aircraft would not be authorized to fly over Dinosaur National Monument unless warranted by an emergency situation or approved in advance.

2.4.12 Riparian

2.4.12.1 Goals and Objectives

Maintain, restore, improve, protect, and expand riparian-wetland areas so they are in proper functioning condition and meet Utah Rangeland Health Standards for their productivity, biological diversity, and sustainability, and achieve an advanced (late-climax seral stage) ecological status, except where resource management would require an earlier ecological status for such purposes as vegetation diversity.

Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) is the minimum acceptable riparian goal. However, PFC may not provide the streamside and aquatic conditions to meet goals for other resources. These include, but are not limited to, fisheries habitat, migratory bird habitat, unique recreational values, and/or forage. Specific objectives and management actions such as those stated below would be implemented in order to meet riparian goals.

1. maintain the natural configuration of all streams;
2. stream bank damage caused by livestock would be less than 10% of a stream segment within an allotment/pasture.
3. site-specific plans, where appropriate, would be prepared in collaboration with affected livestock operators, the UDWR, the Central Utah Water Conservancy Districts, and other interested parties, agencies, or organizations to identify desired plant communities, establish specific management objectives, and recommend practices to be employed to achieve desired results; and
4. monitoring and evaluation strategies would be implemented to measure progress in accordance with Utah's Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Management.

Certain situations may occur that would allow BLM to modify specific grazing objectives set forth in this plan.

2.4.12.2 Actions Common to All

Management actions to meet riparian objectives would include fencing, herding, change of livestock class, temporary closures, and/or change of season.

Allow no new surface-disturbing activities within active flood plains, public water reserves, or 100 meters of riparian areas unless (a) there are no practical alternatives; (b) impacts would be fully mitigated; or c) the action was designed to enhance the riparian resources.

Acquire and expand riparian-wetland areas through exchange, donation, or purchase as opportunities arise.

Restore and/or re-establish cottonwood, willow, and other riparian species along major riparian and other wetland areas.

Development of springs and seeps to improve livestock, wild horse, and wildlife distribution would be designed and constructed to protect ecological processes and functions.

Restrict or mitigate those surface-disturbing activities that would adversely affect wetlands.

Adjust livestock management practices on riparian areas that do not satisfactorily respond to improved grazing management after all other options have been pursued.

Where feasible, fence spring sources and any other areas that may need special protection, such as amphibian ecosystems on a site-by-site basis.

The following mitigation measures would be included as applicable:

- Keep construction of all new stream crossings to a minimum. Stream crossings with culverts would be designed and constructed to allow fish passage, where needed. All stream crossings would be designed and constructed to keep impacts to riparian and aquatic habitat to a minimum.
- Relocate existing roads out of riparian areas where feasible or necessary to restore watershed and riparian stability.

As identified in the preliminary riparian inventory, maintain 295 mi and 3,674 acres of riparian areas currently in proper functioning condition. Improve 133 miles and 1,452 acres functioning

at risk and 79 miles and 1,213 acres not in properly functioning condition. Note: These are preliminary numbers and they may change as the inventory is completed.

2.4.13 Soil and Water Resources

2.4.13.1 Goals and Objectives

Eliminate or reduce discharge of pollutants into surface waters and achieve water quality that provides protection and propagation of fish, amphibians, wildlife, livestock, and recreation in and on the water.

Restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the area's waters as required by the State of Utah's and EPA's water quality standards.

Pipeline crossings of perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral stream channels should be constructed to withstand 100-year floods to prevent breakage and subsequent accidental contamination of runoff during high flow events. Surface crossings must be constructed high enough to remain above stream flows at each crossing, and subsurface crossings must be buried deep enough to remain undisturbed by scour throughout passage of the peak flow. Hydraulic analysis should be completed in the design phase by the project proponent to eliminate potential environmental degradation associated with pipeline breaks at stream crossings to avoid repeated maintenance of such crossings.

Specific recommendations regarding surface and subsurface crossings are found in Guidance for Pipeline Crossings (see Appendix B).

VFO would operate under the unified policy to protect water quality and aquatic ecosystems on federal lands (Unified Federal Policy for a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management). This policy guides protection of water quality and aquatic ecosystem health through the reduction of polluted runoff, the improvement of natural resources stewardship, and an increase in public involvement in watershed management on federal lands.

2.4.13.2 Actions Common to All

Collaborate with the state, counties, Tribes, and the Division of Water Rights when possible to protect and enhance priority watersheds.

Cooperate with states and Tribes to review processes for issuing and renewing use authorizations and licenses when these uses/licenses may affect watershed condition and water quality. Revise these processes if necessary to ensure that they address watershed protection, improvement, and monitoring and water quality compliance needs.

Continue partnership with State of Utah, Daggett County, UDWR, USFS, Wyoming Fish and Game, and Rock Springs BLM to develop a watershed activity plan for Red Creek in Daggett County.

Restore and protect water quality and severe and critical erosion areas by restricting or mitigating surface disturbance.

Comply with standards identified in "The Surface Operating Standards for Oil and Gas Exploration and Development" (Gold Book) unless otherwise specified in the plan.

BLM would adhere to criteria outlined in the Colorado River Salinity Control Act.

Develop additional and maintain existing water rights.

Work in partnership with the State of Utah and others to reduce potential affects of selenium loading on the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge and Pariette Wetlands.

Ensure the physical presence and legal availability of water on public lands. Ensure that those waters meet or exceed established federal and state water quality standards for specific uses, and mitigate activities to prevent water quality and watershed degradation.

Reduce sediment and salinity production on important watersheds and critical soils through intensive management and construction measures to reduce water degradation of the Green River, White River, and their tributaries.

The State of Utah's Non-Point Source Management Plan would be used as a standard to reduce potential non-point source of pollution impacts. Coordinate with the Utah Division of Water Quality as needed.

On a case-by-case basis, major water developments would be permitted if they are consistent with the plan.

2.4.13.2.1 Biological Soil Crusts

Where the functions of crusts are impaired or eliminated because of land use practices and are essential to the health of the ecosystem, guidelines from Technical Reference 1730-2 would be implemented where feasible to protect or restore the functions of crusts.

Measures would be taken to identify and avoid biological soil crust areas when possible by considering the following factors: disturbance type, intensity, timing, frequency, duration, or event. Monitor on-going investigations regarding the values of biological soil crusts and relationships of other ecosystem parameters.

Specific activities that would include biological crust considerations would be prescribed fire, post-fire management, invasive weed control, energy development, grazing, OHV use, and range improvement projects.

2.4.13.3 Special Designations

2.4.13.3.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)

2.4.13.3.1.1 Goals and Objectives

Designate and manage areas as ACECs where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values; fish and wildlife resources; or other natural system or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

2.4.13.3.1.2 Actions Common to All

Continue the designation of the following ACECs:

- Pariette Wetlands (10,437 acres) – Manage to protect high value wetland and wildlife habitat resources. Manage as NSO and close to mineral material sales.

- Red Creek Watershed (24,475 acres) – Manage to protect the high value watershed and wildlife habitat resources.
- Lears Canyon (1,375 acres) – Manage to protect the relict vegetation. Manage as NSO and close to mineral material sales.

2.4.13.3.2 Wild and Scenic Rivers

2.4.13.3.2.1 Goals and Objectives

Determine eligibility and suitability for designation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

2.4.13.3.2.2 Actions Common to All

Continue to manage previously recommended segments of the Upper Green and Lower Green Rivers to protect their outstandingly remarkable values and the tentative classifications until such time that a designation decision is made.

New river segments found suitable and recommended for designation would be managed in accordance with the Wild and Scenic River Act to prevent non-impairment of outstandingly remarkable values within line of sight up to one-quarter mile from center-line on each side of the river not to exceed 320 acres per mile (see Appendix C for classifications).

2.4.13.3.3 Wilderness

2.4.13.3.3.1 Goals and Objectives

Manage WSAs as directed in the Interim Management Policy (IMP) For Lands Under Wilderness Review (H-8550-1) in a manner that does not impair their suitability for designation as wilderness. Allow temporary uses that create no new surface disturbance nor involve permanent placement of structures. Temporary, non-disturbing activities, as well as activities governed by valid existing rights, may generally continue in WSAs.

Prepare and maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of certain public lands to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics.

2.4.13.3.3.2 Actions Common to All

Manage the following WSAs; Daniels Canyon (2,496 acres), Winter Ridge (42,462 acres), West Cold Spring (3,200 acres), Diamond Breaks (3,900 acres), Bull Canyon (326 acres), and the Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Natural Area (400 acres) according to BLM's IMP.

If any WSA is released by Congress from wilderness consideration and management during the life of the RMP, those lands would be managed as prescribed in this plan.

2.4.13.4 Special Status Species

2.4.13.4.1 Special Status Plant Species

2.4.13.4.1.1 Goals and Objectives

Conserve and protect special status species and enhance their habitats.

Implement recovery measures for special status species, including listed species and the ecosystems on which they depend.

Mitigate or reduce long-term habitat fragmentation through avoidance and site-specific reclamation to return areas to productive levels.

Manage all listed T&E plant species and the habitats upon which they depend in such a manner as to conserve and recover these species to the point where the requirements of the Endangered Species Act are no longer necessary.

Manage non-listed sensitive species and the habitats upon which they depend in such a manner as to preclude the need to list them as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The guidance for this management is put forth in the BLM 6840 Manual.

Implement the specific goals and objectives of recovery plans, conservation agreements and strategies, and approved activity level plans. BLM would continue to work with USFWS and others to ensure that plans and agreements are updated as necessary to reflect the latest scientific data.

Implement the direction contained in the Northwest National Fire Plan Project Design and Consultation Process and the Counterpart Regulations including Alternative Consultation Agreements.

Implement the management necessary to increase populations of special status species, including federally listed animal species, and restore them to their historic ranges by enhancing, protecting, and restoring known and potential habitat.

2.4.13.4.1.2 Actions Common to All

BLM would continue to implement the specific goals and objectives of all recovery plans, conservation plans and strategies, and activity level plans.

BLM would continue to work with USFWS and others to ensure that plans and agreements are updated as necessary to reflect the latest scientific data. Recovery plans have been finalized for Uintah Basin hookless cactus, shrubby reed–mustard, and clay reed-mustard. A draft plan is being developed by the USFWS for Ute ladies' tresses. A Conservation Plan has been prepared for *Astragalus equisolensis, Penstemon goodrichii, Penstemon grahamii and Penstemon scarious* var. *albifluvis.*

Where special status plant species, including listed T&E plant species, occur on public lands in the planning area, BLM would collaborate with affected local, state, and federal agencies and researchers in the implementation of approved recovery plans and conservation strategies to protect, stabilize, and recover such species and their habitats. In addition to on-the-ground actions, strategies would be developed to provide public education on species at-risk, significance of the species to the human and biological communities, and reasons for protective measures that would be applied to the lands involved. Continue or develop monitoring studies in order to determine population dynamics and trends.

Complete inventories and map current occupied and potential habitats for all listed and non-listed special status plant species.

Develop relevant species-specific plans utilizing USFWS guidelines where applicable. This may include habitat management plans, conservation agreements, or other suitable plans.

2.4.13.4.2 Special Status Animal Species

2.4.13.4.2.1 Goals and Objectives

Conserve and recover all state special status species including federally listed species and the ecosystems on which they depend.

Mitigate or reduce long-term habitat fragmentation through avoidance and site-specific reclamation to return areas to productive levels.

Manage all listed T&E animal species and the habitats upon which they depend in such manner as to conserve and recover these species to the point where the requirements of the Endangered Species Act are no longer necessary.

Manage non-listed sensitive species and the habitats upon which they depend in such a way as to preclude the need to list them as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The guidance for this management is put forth in the BLM 6840 Manual.

Implement the direction contained in the Northwest National Fire Plan Project Design and Consultation Process and the Counterpart Regulations including Alternative Consultation Agreements.

BLM would continue to work with USFWS and others to ensure that plans and agreements are updated as necessary to reflect the latest scientific data. Recovery plans have been finalized for eight species (black-footed ferret, bald eagle, Mexican spotted owl, peregrine falcon, bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, and razorback sucker).

Implement the management necessary to increase populations of special status species, including federally listed animal species, and restore them to their historic ranges by enhancing, protecting, and restoring known and potential habitat.

In cooperation with UDWR and USFWS, continue to implement the goals of the Black-footed Ferret Recovery Plan by augmenting existing population in the Snake John Wash area.

2.4.13.4.2.2 Actions Common to All

Collaborate with the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies to promote public education on species, their importance to the human and biological community, and reasons for protective measures that would be applied to the lands involved.

Continue inventories and map current occupied and potential habitats for all special status animal species.

In collaboration with the USFWS, DWR, and other partners, develop habitat management plans or conservation strategies for sensitive species.

As additional data are collected over the life of the RMP, land managers would continually re-evaluate population and habitat status. Management emphasis would be to accumulate ecological information and distributional data to enhance BLM's ability to protect, conserve, recover, and manage these species in the future.

BLM would continue to implement the specific goals and objectives of all Recovery Plans, Conservation Plans and Strategies, and activity level plans.

2.4.13.4.3 Special Status Raptor Species

2.4.13.4.3.1 Bald Eagle

Protect and restore cottonwood bottoms for bald eagle winter habitat along the Green and White Rivers, at Pelican Lake, and at the Cliff Creek Bald Eagle roost site, as well as any new roost sites discovered in the future.

2.4.13.4.3.2 Peregrine Falcon

Protect and enhance riparian habitat in Pariette Draw, along the Green River, White River, Bitter Creek, and other drainages.

2.4.13.4.3.3 Ferruginous Hawk

In cooperation with UDWR maintain and enhance white-tailed prairie dog and other foraging habitat to provide primary food sources for the ferruginous hawk.

2.4.13.4.4 Other Selected Special Status Animal Species

2.4.13.4.4.1 Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Restore and conserve riparian areas and develop specific riparian vegetation objectives that would benefit bird species dependent on riparian areas.

Fence riparian areas to reduce or eliminate grazing pressure on young trees, especially willow and cottonwood.

Apply rotation grazing or consider eliminating hot-season grazing in riparian areas to allow young trees to become established.

Control or eliminate non-native plant species in riparian habitats.

2.4.13.4.4.2 Black-footed Ferret

BLM would manage the black-footed ferret consistent with the 1999 Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Plan Amendment and those portions of the Cooperative Plan for the Reintroduction and Management of Black-footed Ferret in Coyote Basin, Uintah County, Utah that are consistent with this plan amendment.

2.4.13.4.4.3 Bonytail, Colorado Pikeminnow, Humpback Chub, Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, and Razorback Sucker

Implement recovery plans actions for bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, and razorback sucker.

Implement Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Colorado River cutthroat trout in the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming signed April 2001, or more recent revisions of this agreement.

The following measures from the agreement would be implemented:

- Monitor vegetation with low level infra-red photography
- Continue macro-invertebrate sampling
- Fencing

- Stream bank stabilization
- Stream flow modifications
- Pursue in flow agreements

Enhance habitat and remove or control non-native fish that threaten various life stages of these fish.

2.4.14 Travel/Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV)

2.4.14.1 Goals and Objectives

Establish working partnerships with local and state agencies, user groups, commercial providers, and other interested parties that would facilitate effective OHV program development including the planning for and implementation of successful trail systems and use areas.

Provide areas for OHV and motorized use, while protecting other resource values.

All Action Alternatives would comply with BLM's National OHV Policy.

2.4.14.2 Actions Common to All

In collaboration with interested parties, BLM would make future route adjustments based on access needs, recreational opportunities, and natural resource constraints. These adjustments would occur only in areas with open and/or limited route designations and would be analyzed at the activity planning level.

2.4.14.2.1 Scenic Backways and Byways

Continue to manage Nine-Mile Canyon as a National Backcountry Byway. Crouse Canyon would be managed as State of Utah Scenic Backway, and the Flaming Gorge-Uintas Scenic Byway and the Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Highway would be managed as National Scenic Byways.

2.4.15 Vegetation

2.4.15.1 Goals and Objectives

Ensure that management of native and naturalized plant species enhances, restores, and does not reduce the biological and genetic diversity of natural ecosystems.

Maintain and/or enhance soil and watershed conditions and forage production.

Achieve a desired ecological stage or desired plant community structure.

Control noxious weed or insect infestations.

Protect special status plant species and their habitats.

2.4.15.2 Actions Common to All

Allow mechanical, fire, biological, or chemical control of noxious weeds and insect infestations within the resource planning area with restrictions to protect desired ground cover and water

quality. Use the type of manipulation appropriate to and consistent with other land use objectives.

Manage the vegetation to attain the ecological stage that would benefit wildlife in crucial habitat and livestock grazing. Manage vegetation in remaining areas that results in high vegetation species diversity.

Use of pesticides and herbicides shall comply with the applicable federal and state law. Pesticides and herbicides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses and within limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior. Prior to the use of pesticides, project proponents shall obtain from the Authorized Officer written approval of a plan showing the type and quantity of material to be used, pest(s) to be controlled, method of application, location of storage and disposal of containers, and any other information deemed necessary by the Authorized Officer. Emergency use of pesticides shall be approved in writing by the Authorized Officer prior to use.

Manage the vegetation to attain the ecological stage that would:

- Ensure sustainability
- Meet authorized use allocations (livestock, wildlife, wild horses)
- Ensure species diversity

TABLE 2-1. EXISTING SERAL STAGES BY VEGETATION TYPE

	% Late	% Mid	% Early	Acres
Black Sagebrush	70	20	10	241,416
Wyoming Sagebrush	75	20	5	377,817
Mountain Sagebrush	70	20	10	78,000
Four Wing Salt Bush	75	15	10	145,012
Gardner's Salt Bush	80	10	5	58,704
Desert Shrub	65	10	25	351,766
Riparian	75	15	10	8,974
Mountain Browse	85	10	5	109,987
Greasewood	90	5	5	61,213
Pinyon-Juniper	80	10	10	614,518
Douglas Fir	80	15	5	137,997
Aspen	90	5	5	2927

Source: Steve Strong, Vernal Field Office, 2002.

Manage the following vegetative types to achieve the desired mix of seral stages:

TABLE 2-2. DESIRED SERAL STAGES BY VEGETATION TYPE

	% Late	% Mid	% Early	# of Acres
Black Sagebrush	80	15	5	241,416
Wyoming Sagebrush	55	30	15	377,817
Mountain Sagebrush	55	30	15	78,000
Four Wing Salt Bush	55	30	15	145,012
Gardner's Salt Bush	90	5	5	58,704
Desert Shrub	80	15	5	351,766
Riparian	90	5	5	8,974
Mountain Browse	55	30	15	109,987
Greasewood	55	30	15	61,213
Pinyon-Juniper	60	25	15	614,518
Douglas Fir	60	20	20	137,997
Aspen	45	30	25	2,927

Source: Steve Strong, Vernal Field Office, 2002

In order to help control noxious weeds power washing may be required for permitted uses.

Users of BLM-administered land would be required to use certified weed-free feed such as hay, straw, mulch, hay cubes, pellets, and grain.

Restore or rehabilitate up to 200,000 acres of sagebrush-steppe habitat over the life of the plan. Such vegetation treatments would consider the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Guidelines for Management of Sage Grouse Populations and Habitats and State and Local Conservation Plans.

Comply with the Memorandum of Understanding among Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding sage grouse management.

2.4.16 Visual Resource Management (VRM)

2.4.16.1 Goals and Objectives

Manage the public lands in such a way as to preserve those scenic vistas, which are deemed to be most important:

in their impact on the quality of life for residents and communities in the areas;

in their contribution to the quality of recreational visitor experiences; and

in supporting the regional tourism industry and segments of the local economy dependent on public land resources.

Seek to complement the rural, agricultural, historic, and urban landscapes on adjoining private, state, and tribal lands by maintaining the integrity of background vistas on the public lands.

2.4.16.2 Actions Common to All

Maintain or improve the scenic quality of the landscape and design and mitigate visual intrusions consistent with the objectives established for the specific visual resource management classes outlined in BLM Handbook H-8410-1.

2.4.17 Wild Horses

2.4.17.1 Goals and Objectives

Provide for an AML of wild horses that would result in a thriving balance and avoids deterioration of the range.

2.4.17.2 Actions Common to All

In an area/s identified where wild horses would be maintained and managed:

Protect them from unauthorized capture, branding, harassment, or death.

Provide for the appropriate number by:

1. reducing reproductive rates to levels which would accommodate a minimum four-year gather schedule to allow for maintenance of the AML;
2. maintaining the desired sex structure for herds;
3. establishing a more "normal distribution" through selective removal; and
4. managing horse populations to reflect allocated or available forage.

Maintain herd characteristics and genetic diversity.

Periodically introduce new animals to maintain genetic viability.

Maintain healthy wild horse populations and continue appropriate testing protocols through close coordination with the State of Utah Veterinarian.

Limit management of wild horses to the projected occurrence area of the Herd Management Area (HMA).

Manage habitat to:

1. sustain established wild horse populations and;
2. achieve and maintain a desired plant community that would provide palatable, nutritious forage for wild horses while sustaining rangeland health and a thriving natural ecological balance.

2.4.18 Wildlife and Fisheries

2.4.18.1 Goals and Objectives

Provide, maintain, enhance, and protect habitats for a diversity of fish and wildlife species within the planning area.

Maintain, restore, enhance, and protect crucial habitats for all fish and wildlife species and restore degraded habitats. Manage for unfragmented blocks of continuous habitat that would provide the life cycle requirements of a variety of wildlife species.

Identify species and habitats most in need of conservation.

Coordinate with UDWR and other partners to accomplish the population and habitat goals and objectives of current, revised, and/or future big game Herd Management Plans that are consistent with and meet the goals and objectives of this land use plan.

2.4.18.2 Actions Common to All

BLM would consider habitat banking as a method to compensate for habitat loss due to surface-disturbing activities.

Coordinate with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to prepare an annual operating plan for predator control within the planning area.

Enlist APHIS' continued support to provide predator control within the black-footed ferret reintroduction area and provide carnivore samples for on-going disease monitoring.

The VFO would assist in implementing the strategic plan for Utah's Initiative on Blue Ribbon Fisheries by managing aquatic and riparian habitats along the Green River, from the Ashley National Forest border to the Colorado/Utah border, for a quality cold water sport fishery and Pelican Lake for a quality warm water sport fishery. In addition, any aquatic and riparian habitats along other waters identified as Blue Ribbon Fisheries would be managed for quality sport fisheries. The VFO would implement this initiative to the extent consistent and appropriate with the Vernal RMP and other land use authorizations.

Reduce habitat fragmentation by requiring oil and gas field development plans and encouraging such activities as well clustering, multiple drilling from a single pad, utilization of existing roads and pipelines, and other measures to minimize surface impacts.

In accordance with Executive Order 13186, incorporate conservation measures for the protection of migratory birds, as outlined in the Utah Partners-In-Flight Avian Conservation Strategy and other scientific information, into all surface-disturbing activities.

Manage habitat to prevent the need for additional listing of species under the Endangered Species Act and to contribute to the recovery of those species already listed.

2.4.18.2.1 Raptors

Cooperate with utility companies, UDWR, and USFWS to prevent electrocution of raptors.

Spatial and temporal buffers applied to disturbances in the vicinity of nesting raptors should be tailored to the individual raptor species involved and based on factors such as line of sight distance between nest and disturbance, type and duration of disturbance, nest structure security, sensitivity of the species to disturbance, observed responses to related disturbances, and the amount of other disturbances already occurring in the vicinity.

Pursue a partnership between industries, local governments, USFWS, UDWR, BLM, and others to establish a raptor management fund to be utilized for raptor population monitoring and habitat enhancement.

2.4.18.2.2 Reintroductions

Reintroduction of native fish and wildlife species into appropriated habitats would be accomplished through coordination with UDWR, counties, and interested publics through appropriate public participation processes. Reintroductions would involve, but may not be limited to, native species such as Rocky Mountain big horn sheep, moose, bison, and Colorado River cutthroat trout, and wild turkey.

Implement the guidelines outlined in the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Cooperative Agreement Between BLM, Diamond Mountain Resource Area, Vernal District and UDWR Northeastern Region (1993), and the Vernal District Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep Guidance Plan (1987).

After analysis, reintroductions would be made in areas where they do not conflict with livestock or where such conflicts would not be avoided. Coordination with permittees would be required.

Allotments near current or potential Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep habitat, where future transplants are likely to occur, should be considered for conversion from domestic sheep grazing to cattle grazing.

Potential reintroduction of gray wolves would be made in consultation with the UDWR, USFWS, Ute Tribe, counties, and private landowners through the Resource Advisory Council process for public involvement. Should the State of Utah develop a draft wolf management plan, BLM would comply with that plan.

2.4.18.2.3 Mountain Lion and Black Bear

In consultation with UDWR, promote appropriate habitat enhancement to contribute to maintaining a healthy predator population within the existing suitable habitat, while considering human safety, economic concerns, and other wildlife species.

Placement of bear bait on public land would require a permit.

2.4.18.2.4 Mule Deer, Rocky Mountain Elk, and Pronghorn

Improve or increase forage through vegetation treatments that would setback the seral stage of crucial use areas, and, if necessary, re-seed areas with a variety of native and adapted non-native plant species.

It is preferred that surface-disturbing actions within crucial deer winter range would be located in pinyon juniper rather than browse where both vegetation types occur.

Acquire and protect crucial wildlife habitat through sale or exchange.

Establish new and maintain all existing guzzlers and other water sources to improve habitat and distribution in the planning area.

2.4.18.2.5 White-tailed Prairie Dog

In conjunction with the USFWS and UDWR, participate in the development of a conservation plan for the white-tailed prairie dog.

2.4.18.2.6 Neotropical Migratory Birds

Provide habitat for cavity-nesting non-game wildlife species and other species that utilize standing snags during a portion of their life cycles.

In cooperation with permittees, manage grazing to allow regeneration of riparian tree species and to protect natural water sources.

Prevent the spread of non-native plants, especially cheatgrass, salt cedar, and Russian olive.

Strive for a dense understory with a reduction in salt cedar and improvement of cottonwood regeneration.

2.4.18.2.7 Habitat Improvements

Wildlife habitat improvement projects would require consultation with UDWR on job design, construction techniques, and project feasibility. Revise the Pariette Wetlands portion of the Myton Habitat Management Plan.

Work with permittees to provide water to wildlife on all BLM water developments, including troughs, after livestock are removed from an allotment or pasture. Wildlife escape devices would be installed on all new and existing water troughs in the planning area.

Existing Habitat Management Plans (e.g., Browns Park, Myton, and Diamond Mountain-Ashley Creek) would continue to be implemented and revised, and new ones would be developed as necessary.

Develop antelope and upland game guzzlers on a case-by-case basis considering the effects to migratory birds, wildlife, and livestock.

Encourage coordination with oil and gas companies to inform BLM and USFWS of plans for workovers in order to protect species from disturbances during critical time periods.

2.4.18.2.8 Habitat Protection

Do not allow activities that would result in adverse impacts to antelope from May 1 through June 30 on currently identified 7,800 acres of antelope fawning ground in Antelope Flat. This restriction does not apply if antelope are not present or if impacts would be mitigated through other management actions. This restriction also does not apply to maintenance and operations of existing facilities.

Modify existing fences on public lands where wildlife are adversely affected. With wildlife-restricting fences bordering public lands, work with owners toward modifying such fences to improve natural movement of wildlife.

Require a habitat mitigation plan prior to development of tar sand resources within special tar sands areas.

2.4.19 Woodlands and Forest

2.4.19.1 Goals and Objectives

Follow national BLM Forest Health and Forest Management Standards and Guidelines to assess conditions and guide management actions for the forest and woodland resource.

Allow public utilization of forest and woodland species before/after vegetative treatments that would be conducted to achieve desired future conditions. Allow the utilization of forest and woodland species as a tool for vegetative treatments.

Manage forests and woodlands for long-term healthy habitat for animal and plant species, forest and woodland health, and riparian restoration and enhancement. Provide for timber production where feasible and compatible with forest health and other resource management objectives.

Restore productivity and biodiversity in forest, woodland, and riparian areas. Allow for the harvest of pinyon/juniper for fuelwood, biomass, posts, pinyon nuts, Christmas and ornamental live trees, and special forest products. Manage pinyon/juniper to control encroachment and to improve wildlife habitat, woodland health, and watershed conditions.

Manage oak by sustaining and enhancing some of the trees in the older age classes in areas that are suitable for maintaining and increasing acorn yields. Manage aspen to maintain diversity of age classes and to allow for species reestablishment.

Encourage utilization of woodland products, including biomass, from lands that would be converted to other resource uses and salvage of woodland products where compatible with other resource management objectives.

Pursue partnerships to provide social and economic benefits to local residents, businesses, and future generations. Encourage stewardship contracting in some areas to achieve various resource management objectives.

Identify, maintain, and restore forest and woodland old-growth stands to a pre-fire suppression condition. The Vernal Field Office would adopt the USFS old-growth definitions and identification standards as per the USFS document "Characteristics of Old-Growth Forests in the Intermountain Region (April 1993)." In instances where the area of application in the previous document doesn't apply to specific species (for example, *Pinus edulis*), use the document, "Recommended Old-Growth Definitions and Descriptions, UDSA Forest Service Southwestern Region, (Sept.1992)."

2.4.19.2 Management Common to All

Develop a forest and woodland management plan incorporating the goals and objectives listed below:

- Allow for reforestation of forest and woodland sites after disturbances, where needed for stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, and succession of ecosystems; restoration of native species; and seed sources lost in a stand replacement fire or other stand replacing events.
- Areas determined to need re-seeding would be treated with a variety of plant species that are desirable for wildlife habitat, livestock, and watershed management, while maintaining vegetation species diversity. The use of site adapted native plant species is encouraged.
- Forests and woodlands would be managed using timber harvest and/or woodcutting in conjunction with pre-commercial thinning, prescribed fire, chaining and other techniques to achieve site-specific objectives of restoring and maintaining forest health, biodiversity,

and wildlife habitat; insect and disease control; as a tool for hazard fuel reduction and WUI projects; riparian restoration and; and other resource management goals.

- Forest and woodland treatments and harvests would continue to be designed in accordance with silvicultural prescriptions. Irregular boundaries of treatment and harvest areas would be required to reduce the detrimental impacts to the scenic values.
- Pinion/ juniper and oak management would be implemented to maintain commodity production, enhance resource values, and reduce pinion/juniper dominance. Priority areas for pinion/juniper treatments would be aspen stands, productive grasslands, forested areas, and shrublands where loss of vegetative diversity is likely. The treatments would be conducted to provide a mosaic pattern to meet wildlife habitat requirements.
- Oak stands on suitable sites would be managed to maintain and increase the size, vigor and productivity of individual trees to increase acorn yields. Methods may include cutting, pruning, and burning.
- Aspen stands would be would be managed to maintain or enhance distribution, density, regeneration and sustainability, and to favor regeneration of aspen where deemed appropriate. Stands would be managed for maintenance or enhancement using a variety of methods including harvest cutting or burning.
- Allow for the harvesting, cutting, and pruning, of forest and woodland species that are a hazard to public safety, private property, structures, and cultural resources.
- Allow for the collection of common native seed and non-barrel cacti, except in periods of low vegetative or seed production.
- Allow for the maintenance and enhancement of relict stands, picnic areas, and other stands of special significance by methods such as chemical, mechanical, and prescribed fire.
- Allow for the management of cottonwood and other species to restore, enhance, and maintain riparian vegetation.

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